

U.S. Department of State

U.S.-Mexico Partnership for Prosperity Spurs Economic Initiatives

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Senior U.S. and Mexican officials and corporate executives announced several major initiatives to spark economic development in Mexico during a two-day session held here under the auspices of the U.S-Mexico Partnership for Prosperity. More than 850 U.S. and Mexican entrepreneurs and government officials met at the St. Francis Hotel here for two days to discuss business opportunities and prospects for supporting Mexico's economic expansion.

Partnership announcements included:

- The historic signing of an agreement which will enable the **U.S. Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC)** to offer a full-range of financial and risk insurance services to U.S. firms doing business in Mexico. The agreement must be approved by the Mexican Senate.
- The U.S. and Mexico agreed to explore development of a **Peace Corps** program in Mexico that would bring volunteers in the high-tech sector to work with Mexico's **National Council on Science and Technology (CONACYT)** on small business development, science and technology and science and development.
- **U.S. Bank** and the Mexican savings bank **BANSEFI** announced a new low-cost service to transfer funds from the U.S. to the most rural communities in Mexico for as low as **six dollars** per transfer through a commercial banking alliance known as **The People's Network (L@ Red de la Gente.)**
- The **U.S. Trade and Development Agency** announced plans to provide \$1.38 million in assistance for feasibility studies for infrastructure projects in Mexico, including the expansion of the Ciudad Obregon airport, development of Mexico's Intelligent Transportation Systems Architecture project and support for Mexico's Federal Competition Commission.
- The **U.S. Federal Reserve Bank** and the **Bank of Mexico** announced the establishment of an automated clearinghouse for crossborder financial transactions. The **International Electronic Funds Transfer System (TEFI)** will reduce the cost of financial transactions to less than one dollar.
- Mexico's National Council on Science and Technology (CONACYT) signed agreements with **Arizona, Iowa State, and Georgetown Universities** and the **University of Texas at El Paso** to provide scholarship opportunities for Mexican students, exchange programs for professors and researchers and collaboration for joint research and promotion programs.
- The **University of California** announced plans to open Casa California – a branch campus in Mexico.
- The U.S. and Mexico announced plans to launch the **"Good Partner Award"** to recognize the contribution of the private sector in advancing social and economic development in Mexico. Nominations will be accepted until September 30, 2003.
- **Georgetown University** and the **U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)** announced plans to provide training in Mexico and to develop a cadre of technically trained business leaders in the agriculture and export sectors.
- **USAID** and **Aid to Artisans** announced plans to promote use of lead-free glazes on Mexican ceramic handicrafts.
- **USAID** announced plans to add partnerships between U.S. and Mexican universities under the Training, Internships, Exchanges and Scholarships (TIES) initiative, a \$50 million, eight-year public-private alliance for higher education.
- The **U.S. National Institute of Health's Fogarty International Center** and **CONACYT** announced plans to

strengthen cooperation and research in biomedical sciences, infectious diseases, AIDS/HIV and maternal/infant health..

- The **U.S. Small Business Administration, Mexico's Economic Secretariat** and **National Financing Agency** signed an agreement to work together to develop stronger commercial ties to spur increased trade between small businesses.
- The **U.S. Council on Competitiveness** launched a partnership with their Mexican counterpart organization, the **Mexican Institute for Competitiveness**, to cooperate on competitiveness and foster regional economic development.
- **CONACYT** and **PROVAGUA** announced a project to increase rainfall in the Nuevo Laredo, Tamaulipas, Mexico, and the Laredo, Texas, border region.

The Partnership talks also highlighted the role of corporate citizenship and responsibility in the communities in which they operate including:

- A project by **AOL Time Warner** and the International Centre for Missing and Exploited Children to establish a missing and exploited children's center in Mexico.
- An initiative by **Merck, Inc.** to train Mexican scientists and to contribute to an agenda for innovation through policy dialogues between Mexican and U.S. leaders in partnership with the National Institute of Genomic Medicine, the Foundation for the Americas, and the U.S. Council on Competitiveness.
- A donation of \$250,000 over two years by **Western Union** to the Instituto para el Desarrollo de la Mixteca, a non-profit economic development program in Mexico's Mixteca region.
- A **GE project**, with Mexico City's Museum of Technology, to develop an interactive exhibition designed to improve science education. Called *Reto GE* (GE Challenge), its objective is to encourage students to regard technology as an area of scholarly curiosity and long-term interest.
- A program by **CEMEX** designed to: (1) improve health conditions among poorer families by providing an anti-bacterial product to reduce gastrointestinal and dermatological illnesses; and (2) enable low-income families the opportunity to buy higher-quality construction materials and receive professional technical assistance in homebuilding.
- A fundraising effort led by **COMEX** for construction of housing for low-income families. The houses will have access to municipal services, including water, sewers, and electricity. Funds will be raised from private donors and all the proceeds will be invested.

The unique public-private Partnership for Prosperity initiative was launched by U.S. President George W. Bush and Mexican President Vicente Fox in September 2001 to target economic development in the areas of Mexico which generate the most emigrants based on the premise that no Mexican should feel compelled to leave his home for lack of economic opportunity.

More information is available at the Partnership website: www.p4pworks.org.